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3			
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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 27 March 1978

CG NIDC 78/071C

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DIA review(s)

State Dept. review

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 27 March 1978

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

CONTENTS

SOUTH AFRICA: Military Exercise	Page 1
ZAIRE-ANGOLA: Cross-Border Pursuit	Page 2
CHINA-USSR: Bilateral Relations	Page 2

25X1

SOUTH AFRICA: Military Exercise

25X1 [] //Extensive South African Air Force and air-borne activity during the past two weeks appears to be part of a large-scale military exercise to test and improve the country's ability to carry out paradrop operations. There is no indication that South Africa has immediate plans to send a large number of troops outside the country. It may be preparing for the contingency of increased guerrilla activity in Namibia. For the longer term, the South Africans may have decided that now is the time to increase their preparations for the guerrilla threats to their own territory that they expect from several directions in the future.//

25X1 [] //Earlier this month, some 5,000 reservists, including members of the two reserve parachute battalions, were called to active duty. The scale and unusual nature of the callup initially suggested that South Africa might be planning a strike against guerrilla bases in southern Angola near the Namibian border. []

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25X1 DIA [] some 480 paratroopers took part last week in a two-day exercise that the source called "completely unsuccessful." A second paradrop exercise, probably involving units of all three of the Army's regular and reserve parachute battalions, took place last weekend. In addition, helicopter and light bomber units of the Air Force have been exercising frequently and training for night operations.//

25X1 [] //Namibia is the most immediate cause of military concern in South Africa. South Africa is concerned about a possible increase in guerrilla activity in the months ahead, especially if Prime Minister Vorster decides to hold a preindependence election without a truce with the South-West Africa People's Organization or without UN participation in the election process.//

[] //The South Africans also believe they will eventually have to fend off attacks by South African guerrillas based in Mozambique in a SWAPO-controlled Namibia, or even in a black-ruled Zimbabwe.//

[] //To prepare for these contingencies clearly will require time, and South Africa appears to be taking steps to strengthen its airmobile strike capability. This, along with measures under way to develop a domestic arms industry and to strengthen other branches of the military, would be designed eventually to improve substantially the country's military capabilities. []

ZAIRE-ANGOLA: Cross-Border Pursuit

[] *Zairian President Mobutu confirmed to the US Ambassador that Zairian troops crossed the border into Angola last week in hot pursuit of "Katangan" insurgents.*

[] The Zairian forces briefly occupied the Angolan town of Caianda following tactical air bombardments, but later withdrew into Zaire after reportedly driving the anti-Mobutu forces from their headquarters.

[] Mobutu told the Ambassador that he believes the insurgents were acting with the blessings of the Angolan Government. These hostilities will worsen the already dim prospects for progress in the next round of normalization talks between Angola and Zaire. []

CHINA-USSR: Bilateral Relations

[] *Peking yesterday published the text of its message rejecting Soviet proposals for a joint statement for improving bilateral relations. The Chinese message--and an accompanying*

[redacted]

People's Daily article--makes clear Peking's view that Moscow's sole purpose in sending the proposal to the National People's Congress last month was to score propaganda points.

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[redacted] The rejection--delivered by Vice Foreign Minister Yu Chan to the Soviet Ambassador in Peking on 9 March--says that a joint statement such as that proposed by the Soviets would be meaningless in the absence of "concrete actions to solve practical problems." According to Peking, if Moscow were genuinely interested in improving relations, it would have implemented the agreement China contends Chou En-lai and Premier Kosygin reached in 1969. The Chinese interpretation of this "agreement" is that the Soviets would, among other things, withdraw from Chinese-claimed, Soviet-occupied areas as a precondition for serious border negotiations.

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[redacted] China's message asserts that by not implementing this "agreement"--indeed, by not even admitting its existence--and by building up Soviet forces along the border to the level of "a million troops," Moscow must accept full blame for the current state of Sino-Soviet relations.

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[redacted] Peking's message states that moves to comply with the Chou-Kosygin "agreement" and the reduction of Soviet forces along the entire length of the Sino-Soviet border and in Outer Mongolia are "minimum actions" that Moscow could take to give substance to its expressions of good will.

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[redacted] Peking has aired such demands before and Moscow has rejected them as "unacceptable." China's latest message will reinforce the prevailing view in Moscow that the new leaders in Peking are no more interested in ameliorating the Sino-Soviet dispute than their predecessors.

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[redacted] Comments made by a Soviet diplomat in Peking last week indicate that, as a result of the Chinese message, Moscow has scrapped any plans it may have had to return its chief border negotiator to the long-stalled border talks in Peking.

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